

Secretary Clinton's Message on the 236th Anniversary of the U.S. Marine Corps

November 10, 2011

On behalf of the U.S. Department of State, I am honored to extend my warmest congratulations and best wishes to the valiant men and women of the U.S. Marine Corps on their 236th birthday. Many marines have paid the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our liberty and freedom. To every marine - those currently in uniform and those who have served in the past - we thank you for your selfless dedication, courage, and service to our beloved country.

On this special occasion, I want to acknowledge specifically all of the marines who have served as marine security guards at our embassies and consulates. You play a critical role in ensuring the safe and secure conduct of U.S. diplomacy around the world. To accomplish this mission, you provide internal security services to prevent the compromise of classified U.S. government information and equipment. You also provide protection for U.S. citizens and property located within those official facilities during situations that require urgent action. You are the central point for all mission emergency communications. Our missions operate safely and securely because you stand ready to secure our diplomatic assets.

Since 1946, marine security guards have stood side by side with the State Department during periods of tranquility and crisis alike. I cannot emphasize enough how much we value what the more than 1,300 marine security guards bring to every mission, every day. In the past year, you were indispensable during and following the earthquake in Haiti, during the "Arab awakening" developments in northern Africa and the near east, and most recently, the terrorist attack on our embassy in Kabul. To everyone who enters a diplomatic facility, the marines are a symbol of American values of integrity, courage, loyalty, and commitment. Marine security guards at a U.S. embassy or consulate do not just stand at post one - they stand for America. You are truly America's "ambassadors in blue."

We should also take this opportunity to remember and thank those marines who are serving our nation worldwide "in every clime and place". From the sacrifices of those marines fighting in Afghanistan, to those standing at the ready off the coast of Libya and those marines from Okinawa who rushed to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of Japan after their country was devastated by the great northeast Japan earthquake and tsunami. Marines have time and time again lived up to the corps credo, "semper fidelis." - always faithful. You have, indeed, always been faithful friends and security partners. And for that, we in the department of state remain exceptionally grateful. We salute and honor you today, and every day.

Happy 236th birthday, Marines!